

Tom Horne
Superintendent

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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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HORNE CALLS PROFICIENCY RATE UNACCEPTABLY LOW

The U.S. Department of Education issued its 2002 report for fourth and eighth grade reading, based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the nation's report card.

In fourth grade reading, proficiency rates ranged from 15% for Mississippi to 43% for Connecticut. At 21%, Arizona ranked 36th of the 48 jurisdictions. Eighth grade achievement levels were similar. Controlling for demographics, a comparison of non-Title I schools ranked Arizona eighth grade students 29th out of 47 jurisdictions reporting data for that comparison.

"These rates of proficiency are unacceptably low, for the nation as a whole, and Arizona in particular," said Tom Horne, Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Horne, who took office in January of this year, stated: "We are, for the first time, focusing intensely on raising expectations, implementing accountability of both students and schools, and helping schools raise their academic performance. Once we focus on accountability, and demonstrate that the education budget is being utilized effectively, I can go to the legislature and advocate for giving education a higher priority in funding. This will be most persuasive when we can demonstrate effective accountability, and that additional resources will produce results in higher academic achievement."

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